

Cross Cultural Effect On Customer Satisfaction In Travel And Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

In this piece, researchers look at how cultural variations affect tourist businesses' ability to keep their customers happy. Service providers must comprehend and cater to the varied cultural expectations and preferences of foreign visitors due to the intrinsically global character of the industry. The research delves into the ways in which cultural factors impact consumer satisfaction levels, including individuality vs. collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. The essay analyses important aspects that add to or detract from customer satisfaction via a thorough literature analysis and empirical study using surveys and interviews with visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds. The findings emphasise the need to be mindful of other cultures while providing services, communicating, and designing the entire experience. In order to improve their service techniques and attain greater satisfaction ratings among a culturally varied clientele, the article also offers practical tips for travel and tourist organisations. This study highlights the need of continuous training in cultural competency and adaptable service models in the global travel industry, which is becoming more linked.

Keywords: Cross cultural effect, Customer satisfaction, Travel, Tourism industry.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important functions of the travel and tourism sector in today's interconnected globe is to facilitate trade and cultural exchange. Stakeholders in the sector are more focused on the interaction between cultural backgrounds and customer satisfaction as travellers seek out unique experiences across various nations. Gaining insight into how customer satisfaction varies between cultures may lead to better service, more loyal customers, and long-term success. Because of its global nature, the travel and tourism sector serves customers with diverse cultural expectations and tastes. Perceptions of service quality are influenced by the distinct sets of values, behaviours, and expectations that tourists from various areas bring with them. Service providers striving to create outstanding experiences face both obstacles and possibilities presented by this cultural variety. A company's ability to serve its varied customer base depends on its ability to recognise and respond to cultural subtleties. The complex web of intercultural relationships and their impact on tourist customers' happiness is the subject of this essay. It investigates the ways in which visitors' cultural backgrounds impact their choices, habits, and opinions on the quality of service they get. Furthermore, it delves into ways that industry participants might embrace cultural diversity to boost consumer happiness. The purpose of this article is to help professionals who work in multicultural settings enhance the services they give by analysing case studies and current practices in depth. Understanding and capitalising on cross-cultural influences on customer satisfaction will be crucial for the travel and tourism business as it continues to develop globally. Businesses may boost their competitiveness and help create more inclusive travel experiences for everyone by doing this (Mehmood & Al-Gasaymeh, 2019).

1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Customer experiences and happiness are greatly influenced by varied cultural contacts in the travel and tourism business, which is intrinsically global. Companies in this field would do well to study the impact of cross-cultural factors on consumer happiness as the number of tourists venturing outside their own cultural borders grows. Many parts of a trip might be impacted by cultural differences, such as how people expect to be served, how they express themselves, and how they see hospitality. Travellers from diverse cultural origins have distinct demands and preferences, and this research explores how these cultural elements impact consumer satisfaction. The study's overarching goal is to improve customer satisfaction and cross-cultural understanding by shedding light on these factors so that the travel and tourism industry may better cater to its broad international clientele (Mattila, 2019).

2. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Examining the impact of cultural variations on tourist satisfaction is the driving force for this study. In order to help travel and tourism firms better serve multiple cultural groups, the research intends to examine how different cultural characteristics affect consumer expectations, experiences, and perceptions. In order to aid industry stakeholders in creating more effective strategies to improve service quality and customer experiences across diverse cultural settings, this study aims to explore the significance of cultural elements in affecting consumer happiness. The research also hopes to provide practical advice for companies looking to cater to clients from different cultural backgrounds by identifying important cultural factors that impact customer happiness. The study hopes to promote a more inclusive and customer-centric strategy in the travel and tourism sector by adding to the existing body of information on cross-cultural interactions via this analysis.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, there has been a lot of focus on how different cultures affect consumer satisfaction in the travel and tourist business. This is mainly because of the interplay between different cultural groupings brought about by globalisation. Businesses in the tourist industry who want to boost consumer happiness and service quality must understand these consequences. Many studies in this field have stressed the significance of cultural factors such as collectivism vs. individualism, aversion to ambiguity, power distance, and focus on the future. Customer expectations, perceptions of service quality, and satisfaction levels are impacted by these aspects, according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. As an example, vacationers hailing from individualist cultures may value independence and personal fulfilment more than those hailing from collectivist ones, and vice versa. International visitors have various wants and preferences, thus marketing techniques and service offerings need to be adjusted to satisfy their demands. Cultural variations and their effects on several dimensions of consumer satisfaction have been the subject of much research. For instance, visitors' cultural backgrounds impact their evaluations of the destination, the usefulness of the information given, and the quality of their interactions with service providers (Xu et al., 2022). Service providers and consumers who are culturally compatible are more likely to understand one another and have positive interactions, which in turn increases customer satisfaction. Cultural incongruity, on the other hand, may lead to unhappiness and unpleasant encounters. Customer satisfaction in the travel and tourist business is greatly influenced by language hurdles and communication approaches. Despite the importance of clear and concise communication in providing excellent service, misunderstandings and frustrations may arise due to variations in language ability and communication preferences. Customers are more likely to be satisfied with a service when the supplier tries to speak the customer's native language or shows cultural awareness. Companies in the tourist industry have been using a variety of tactics to boost consumer happiness and overcome cultural barriers. Some methods used to bridge the cultural gap include staff training programmes that concentrate on cultural competency, multilingual signs and materials, and service customisation to line with cultural norms. Technology, in the form of translation applications and culturally specific web platforms, has also helped improve communication and understanding between service providers and visitors. The function of cultural adaptation in initiatives to restore services has also been the subject of empirical research. In order to minimise negative views and restore customer satisfaction after service failures, it is essential to implement recovery tactics that are sensitive to different cultures. Apologies and compensations, for example, need to be culturally acceptable if they are to have any impact; what one culture considers a good enough apology may not be enough for another. A thorough comprehension of varied cultural preferences and behaviours is necessary, according to cross-cultural tourism studies. It implies that companies with a focus on cultural intelligence and the ability to tailor their offerings to diverse cultural groups would most likely have satisfied customers. In addition to improving the client experience, this approach helps tourist businesses stay competitive and sustainable in the global market. In sum, cultural awareness and adaptability are crucial in the tourist business due to the cross-cultural impacts on consumer happiness. Achieving excellence in customer service and developing pleasant visitor experiences continue to depend on incorporating cross-cultural insights into corporate operations as the sector evolves (Xi et al., 2021).

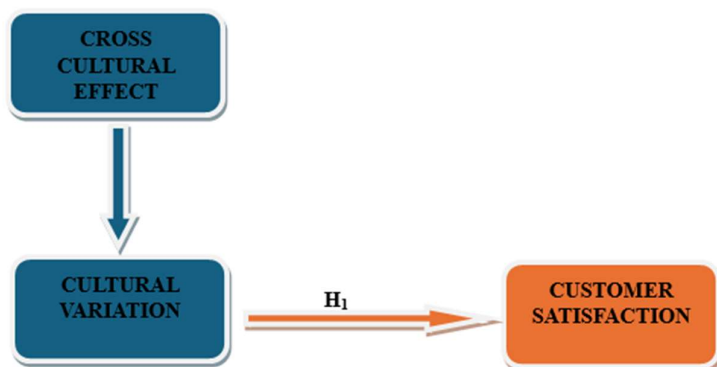
4. RESEARCH QUESTION

- ❖ How can cultural variations affect the level of happiness felt by customers in the tourist sector?

5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- ❖ To determine cultural variations that affect the level of happiness felt by customers in the tourist sector.

6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



7. METHODOLOGY

7.1 Research Design

The goal of quantitative research is to find statistically significant relationships between variables by collecting numerical data on those variables and feeding it into statistical models. Quantitative studies aim to get a more in-depth understanding of society. Researchers often use quantitative methods when examining phenomena with personal effects. Quantitative studies provide hard data in the form of tables and graphs. Quantitative study relies heavily on numerical data, which necessitates a methodical strategy to collect and analysing the data. It may be used in a variety of ways, including averaging out data, making forecasts, looking into connections, and extrapolating results to bigger populations. Quantitative studies are the polar opposite of qualitative studies, which rely on in-depth interviews and observations (e.g., text, video, or audio). Countless academic fields rely on quantitative research methods. This includes fields as diverse as marketing, sociology, chemistry, psychology, economics, and biology.

7.2 Sampling

The questionnaire was pilot-tested with 20 Chinese clients, and then a final sample of 649 customers was used to perform the research. A total of eight hundred surveys were sent out to clients chosen at random. The researcher did not consider any questionnaire that was not filled out for the study.

7.3 Statistical Software

For statistical analysis, SPSS 25 and MS Excel were used.

7.4 Statistical tools

The fundamental character of the data was understood through descriptive analysis. Factor analysis was used to assess validity.

8. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The total number of questionnaires that were given to the participants was 800. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 software was used to evaluate 649 of the 775 returned surveys.

8.1 Factor Analysis

One typical use of Factor Analysis (FA) is to confirm the latent component structure of a set of measurement items. Theoretically, latent (or undiscovered) factors are believed to be responsible for the observed (or measured) variable scores. This model-based approach is called accuracy analysis (FA). Its primary goal is to represent the relationships between variables, including the effects of measurement error and unobserved factors.

You may use the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Method to see whether your data is suitable for factor analysis. To determine whether the sample was sufficient, we examine each model variable individually and the overall model. The statistical measures assess the possible common variance among several variables. The suitability of the data for factor analysis is often improved when the proportion is reduced.

Numbers between zero and one are returned by KMO. Sampling is deemed adequate if the KMO value falls within the range of 0.8 to 1.

It is necessary to take remedial action if the KMO is less than 0.6, which indicates that the sampling is inadequate. Use your best discretion; some authors use 0.5 as this, therefore the range is 0.5 to 0.6.

1. KMO If it's close to zero, it means the overall correlations are tiny compared to the partial correlations. Component analysis is severely hindered by large correlations, to restate.

The following are the acceptance criteria set by Kaiser:

The following are the acceptance criteria set by Kaiser:

Very low, between 0.050 to 0.059.

0.60–0.69 falls short of the norm

Middle grades often fall within the range of 0.70-0.79.

With a quality point score ranging from 0.80 to 0.89.

Incredible variation occurs between 0.90 and 1.00.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test^a

KMO and Bartlett's Test^a		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.958
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4950.175
	df	190
	Sig.	.000
a. Based on correlations		

Claims made for the sake of sampling are thus shown to be valid. Overall, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was run on the correlation matrices to make sure they were relevant. The sampling adequacy value according to Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin is 0.958. Using Bartlett's sphericity test, we found a p-value of 0.00. A significant test result from Bartlett's sphericity test demonstrated that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix.

8.2 Test for hypothesis

❖ Cross-cultural effect

Cross-cultural influence refers to the phenomenon that occurs when individuals from various cultures engage with one another, think, feel, and behave in different ways. This effect has the potential to have a substantial impact on communication, expectations, and overall pleasure in contexts where people from diverse cultural origins engage with one another, such as in the tourism industry.

❖ Cultural variation

This phenomenon is referred to as cross-cultural variance, and it occurs when people who come from different cultural backgrounds display unique variances in their behaviours, beliefs, practices, and standards. These differences have the potential to influence perceptions, relationships, and expectations, which in turn have an impact on a considerable number of aspects of an individual's personal, professional, and social life.

❖ Customer satisfaction

The level of satisfaction that tourists feel may be described as the degree to which their expectations are met or exceeded by the experiences they have throughout their travels. This encompasses characteristics such as the level of service provided, the capacity for cultural knowledge, the ability to communicate, and the general enjoyment of the trip. An indication of the degree to which tourists are content with the services provided by companies operating within the tourism sector is provided by this metric.

In the tourist sector, there is a complex and interdependent link between cross-cultural impacts and client happiness. The impact of cultural variations on customer satisfaction is greatly impacted by cross-cultural impacts, which include differences in behaviour, attitude, and perception.

When it comes to tourism, good communication is essential since visitors may easily get frustrated, misunderstood, and dissatisfied due to language limitations. Providers of tourist services may boost customer happiness and communication by hiring people who are fluent in many languages and culturally sensitive. Tourists originate from many walks of life and bring with them unique cultural conventions, expectations, and behaviours, therefore it's crucial to be sensitive to and appreciate these differences. Tourists are more likely to be satisfied with their experiences when service providers are sensitive to cultural variations and modify their offerings appropriately. Customer satisfaction is greatly enhanced when services are tailored to cultural preferences. Culture has a role in shaping tourists' expectations when it comes to cuisine, lodging, entertainment, and interaction methods. Providers of tourist services may make their customers' stays more pleasant and hassle-free by tailoring their offerings to their preferences; for example, by stocking their restaurants with food that suits certain religious or cultural norms. Customers' expectations of hospitality, service quality, and the entire

experience are influenced by their cultural background. It is essential to comprehend and fulfil these expectations in order to provide experiences that are pleasant. On the other side, if these expectations aren't acknowledged and addressed, it could lead to disappointment and decreased pleasure. Greeting customs, tipping traditions, and other social interactions are all impacted by culturally specific behavioural standards and etiquette. By being aware of and accommodating to these standards, researchers may reduce the likelihood of inadvertent offences and foster a more inviting atmosphere, both of which increase client satisfaction. Customer happiness relies on effective dispute resolution, yet cultural variations might affect how travellers express discontent and what they anticipate from a settlement. Service providers in the tourism industry that are skilled at navigating these variations will be able to handle customer difficulties more quickly and to their satisfaction. Tourists are more likely to be satisfied when they are able to participate in genuine cultural attractions and activities that showcase the local history and customs. In order to provide real cultural exchanges, it is important to avoid making the events seem too manufactured or commercialised. Staff members' capacity to engage constructively with visitors from varied backgrounds is enhanced by funding cross-cultural training. Staff members who have received this training are better equipped to communicate with customers, comprehend cultural subtleties, and provide individualised, high-quality service. A wider audience might be attracted by marketing campaigns that take cultural variations into account. When marketing messaging and promotional materials are culturally appropriate, they help create the correct expectations for visitors and lead to increased satisfaction after they arrive. Finally, it is very beneficial to collect and analyse feedback from travellers from many cultural backgrounds. This will help with ongoing development efforts. Providers in the tourist industry keep their products and services appealing to customers all over the world by listening to their suggestions and adjusting their practices accordingly. To sum up, improving customer happiness in the tourist business requires an awareness of and attention to the cultural aspects of consumer expectations, tastes, and behaviours. Tourism providers may create outstanding experiences that lead to better satisfaction and good word-of-mouth by promoting cultural awareness, customising services, and continually modifying depending on feedback. This is crucial for the success of the sector.

“On the basis of the above discussion, the researcher formulated the following hypothesis, which was to analyse the relationship between Cultural variation and Customer satisfaction.”

H₁: “There is a significant relationship between Cultural variation and Customer satisfaction.”

H₀: “There is no significant relationship between Cultural variation and Customer satisfaction.”

Table.2: ANOVA test (H₁)

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	75207.347	135	4700.459	572.417	.000
Within Groups	681.563	513	8.212		
Total	75888.910	648			

“In this study, the result is significant. The value of F is 572.417, which reaches significance with a p-value of .000 (which is less than the .05 alpha level). This means the ***H₁: “There is a significant relationship between Cultural variation and Customer satisfaction.”*** is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.”

9. CONCLUSION

As a key component in enhancing consumer happiness, cross-cultural communication is of paramount significance in the travel and tourism industry. In the end, businesses can help their staff and customers engage across cultural lines. This may help improve intercultural communication and pave the way for a deeper understanding and appreciation of other cultures. Businesses may do their part to foster an inclusive environment and provide customers with a more memorable experience by hosting cultural events with traditional cuisine and dance. In the travel and tourism industry, cross-cultural communication is crucial for increasing customer happiness, which is why it is so important. By understanding and appreciating cultural differences, hiring a diverse workforce, utilising technology, and encouraging cultural exchange

within firms, researchers can improve cross-cultural communication and create a more personalised and positive customer experience for people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Both theoretical and practical considerations are integral to the model's aims. The identification of cultural elements that contribute to the degree of vacation enjoyment is one area to explore. The creation of methods to measure the degree of contentment among vacationers is one of the concrete goals. In this view, researchers can see that there are many different parts that make up the whole of visitor pleasure. The objective is to get an understanding of the cultural elements that influence and decide the degree of holiday happiness that visitors feel. It is believed that the results of this influence may be predicted, namely in terms of customer loyalty and positive recommendations.

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